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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/631,376	07/30/2003	Eric J. Bergman	54008.8033.US00 P03-0004	2135
45540	7590	10/03/2006	EXAMINER	
PERKINS COIE LLP/SEMITOOL PO BOX 1208 SEATTLE, WA 98111-1208			EL ARINI, ZEINAB	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1746	

DATE MAILED: 10/03/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/631,376	BERGMAN, ERIC J.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Zeinab E. EL-Arini	1746	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 08 September 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 20-24,33-36 and 42-50 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 20-24,33-36 and 42-50 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 9/8/06 has been entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claim 44 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claim 44, line 2, "the aqueous liquid" lacks antecedent basis.

Double Patenting

The double patenting rejection stated in paper No. 20060606 has been withdrawn in view of the terminal disclaimer filed 9/8/06.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and

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the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 20-24, and 45-49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over EP'177 in combination with Park(5,994,238) or Han et al. (6,740,247) new reference.

EP'177 discloses a method for etching semiconductor wafer. The reference teaches placing the wafer into a process chamber, the delivering steps, spraying the DI water, dissolving the anhydrous HF gas into the DI water, and the etching and the spinning as claimed. See the abstract, Fig. 1, page 2, lines 21-27, 55-58, page 3, lines 11-page 4, line 24, and the claims.

EP' as discussed supra discloses all limitation with the exception of thinning the silicon wafer, the controlling step, and the etch rate as claimed.

1. Park discloses a method for fabricating semiconductor device. The reference discloses etching the wafer, the HF vapor, and the steps are performed in vapor phase. See the abstract, col. 1, line 35- col. 3, line 36.

2. Han et al. disclose HF vapor phase wafer cleaning and oxide etching. The reference discloses thinning the wafer by using HF vapor. See col. 1, line 64- col. 2, line 6, col. 2, line 60- col. 3, line 11. The reference discloses the etch rate depends on the temperature and the pressure. See col. 10, lines 8-col. 11, line 10, examples 11-18, and col. 19, lines 41-48.

3. It would have been obvious for one skilled in the art to use the etch rate taught by Park (see claim 1) or Han et al. in the process taught by EP'177 to obtain the claimed

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process. The rate of etching or thinning the wafer depends on the temperature and the pressure of the HF. Controlling the thickness of the liquid layer is well known in the art.

4. Claims 33-36, 42-44 and 50 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over EP'177 in combination Park or Han et al. as applied to claims 20-24, and 45-49 above, and further in view of Schaper et al (US 005/0006738 A1) or Masumoto (US 2004/0214432 A1).

EP'177 in combination with Park or Han et al. as discussed supra teach all limitation with the exception of reducing the wafer thickness or thinning the silicon wafer by back –grinding.

Schaper et al. disclose a method of thinning silicon wafer by back-grinding and/ or plasma etching. See paragraphs 24, 35, and claims 1, 9.

Masumoto discloses a method of thinning a semiconductor wafer comprising back-grinding. See paragraph 19-23, 28, and claims 1-9, 16.

It would have been obvious for one skilled in the art to use the back-grinding step taught by Schaper et al. or Masumoto in process taught by the EP'177 in combination with park or Han et al. to obtain the claimed process. This is because all references are from the same technical endeavor, which is a method of etching or thinning a semiconductor wafer. Back-grinding, followed by HF/ozone may be used to create clean surface.

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 20-24, 33-36, and 42-50 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Zeinab E. EL-Arini whose telephone number is (571) 272-1301. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael Barr can be reached on (571) 272-1414. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Zeinab E. EL-Arini
Zeinab E. EL-Arini
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1746

ZEE

9/22/06